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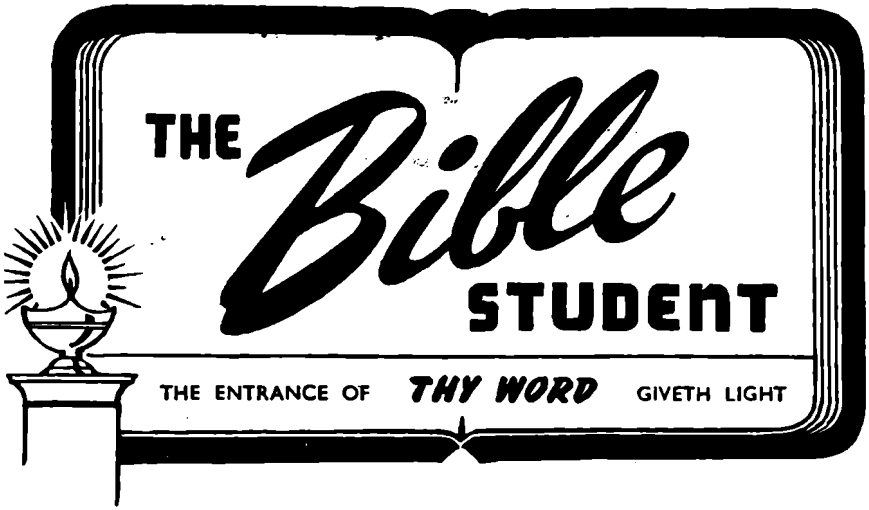
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'WRITTEN THAT YE MAY BELIEVE'

HAROLD ST. JOHN

The Beloved Disciple has contributed five books to the New Testament; two brief letters of about two hundred and fifty words apiece and three larger works—a Gospel, an Epistle and a Revelation.

In each of these larger writings, the author gives plainly his reasons for writing. The Apocalypse purports to be a handbook of prophecy, given by God to Christ and from Him to His servant John 'to shew unto His bondservants things which must shortly come to pass'. The First Epistle is a treatise developing the subject of the soul's assurance of personal and eternal salvation; this is stated in 1 John v. 13: 'these things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life'.

Turning to the Gospel of John, we learn that the author took his stand hard by the fountain-head of knowledge. Matthew the publican is a shadowy figure, standing in the second rank of the apostolate; Mark the Levite is a junior attendant on the apostles Peter and Paul; Luke the physician, a gentile; the two latter had no direct knowledge of the events which they record. On the other hand, John had known Him, that was from the beginning and seems to have been an eyewitness of all that he describes; this appears from John xxi. 24: 'This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true'.

Starting from the wilderness of Judæa and ending at the sea of Tiberias, John walked with his Master through sunshine and shadow, in peace and in strife, in Jerusalem, Samaria and Galilee.

Luke and John alone, out of the Blessed Four, reveal the literary laws on which their works were founded. Luke was a historian, John writes as a theologian. The Gentile doctor reads a mass of literature dealing with the life and times of our Lord, collects and sifts statements contributed by others, and tells of One who increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. The Jewish fisherman fixes his adoring gaze on Him who is the

same yesterday and today and forever; John seems to ignore the very idea of growth, as he writes about the Ancient of days.

Luke dates his narratives from the days of Herod the king, from a decree of Caesar Augustus, from the date of a tax-collector's demand note, from the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar; John starts from the beginning, far behind creation, and instead of telling of Bethlehem and Egypt, simply says: 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory'.

John sets his final seal upon his work in chapter 20:30, 31: 'Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name'.

In these words the writer affirms the *principle* on which the Gospel was written, its immediate *purpose* and its ultimate *profit* for its readers.

The *principle* of writing was that of selection: John had a mass of material before him, the bulk of which he laid aside; there can be no question that he was familiar with the three earlier gospels, and yet there are less than twenty verses which can be quoted as having influenced his language or contributed to his knowledge.

The *purpose* for which he wrote was to convince his readers that three glorious titles are resting upon one human brow; he sets himself to prove the absolute identity which existed between the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth, and the prophetic Messiah of the Hebrews, and finally the Person whose Name was called the Son of God. No man understands the Fourth Gospel until he accepts the unity of our Lord's being, displayed as a tri-unity in history.

John sits like a weaver beside his loom, handling the skeins of his thought, three in number, coloured scarlet and white and blue: in turn, he selects each strand, the scarlet of the suffering Messiah, the white of the sinless Son of Mary and the blue of the Son of God, who came down from heaven.

1. *Jesus*. Why should it be necessary to write a book to maintain the Manhood of Jesus, a truth so familiar and so obvious to us all?

The apostle wrote during the last quarter of the first century of our era; the care-free rapture and the early freshness of Pentecost had waned and the atmosphere of church life was heavy and misty with speculation.

One of John's contemporaries, a heretic named Cerinthus, said to be living in Ephesus at the same time as John, taught that all tangible and visible matter was essentially evil, and therefore a true Incarnation of God was impossible. Jesus had not been born of a virgin, but was the son of Joseph and Mary, only differing from other men by becoming more righteous and wise. Cerinthus taught that the Spirit of God was first united to the Lord Jesus in His baptism by John. By this He was elevated to the peerage of heaven and revealed the Father and performed His miracles. Later the Christ withdrew from the man Jesus, who died at Calvary and was raised from the dead, while the 'spiritual Christ' remained 'impassible', or incapable of suffering.

A second-century Father, Irenaeus, informs us that John wrote his Gospel in direct opposition to the tenets of Cerinthus.

To those whose minds are of that untroubled and unspeculative order which never concerns itself with such investigations as the origin of evil, and who are entirely unembarrassed with any knowledge of early church history, such problems will seem merely trivial and fantastic; actually those who raised these questions did a real service to the Church in that they stimulated much serious enquiry into the Scriptures in the early centuries of our era. Nevertheless, they were pernicious heresies and had they prevailed, the Faith must have perished. The chief doctrinal writers of the New Testament, St Paul in the Colossians, the Great Unknown who gave us the Epistle to the Hebrews, and, above all, St John in his Gospel and his First Epistle, wage relentless war with these theories and give them no quarter.

So far from Christ being a phantom or a fictitious shadow, John maintains that He was true man in every respect; he alone amongst the evangelists tells us that He was capable of weariness as He walked, of thirst whether waiting at the well of Sychar or hanging on the cross of Calvary; He was swayed by human emotions freely sharing the joy of a wedding feast in Cana or the sorrow of a funeral in Bethany.

John watched the One who had robed Himself in light from eternity, laying aside His homespun garments in an upper room and kneeling to wash the feet of His followers. Most emphatically of all, he had seen a soldier plunge the point of his spear into the side of the Redeemer; thence, as he assures us, there issued forth blood and water.

Instead of the body of our Lord being the artificial, fleshless phantom of the 'Gnostics', the truth is that:

That precious stream of water and of blood,
Which from Thy pierced side so freely flowed,
Has put away our sins of scarlet dye,
Washed us from every stain and brought us nigh.

2. *Christ.* The Hebrew word 'Messiah', the Greek 'Christ', and English word 'Anointed' are identical in meaning. The first form occurs only twice in the New Testament, once used by Andrew when he told his brother Peter, 'We have found the Messiah, which is, by interpretation, the Christ', and again, on the lips of a Samaritan woman, as she confessed, 'I know that Messiah cometh, who is called Christ'.

The Messianic hope enriches almost every book in the Old Testament and shines in every chapter of John's Gospel. In the earlier chapters Christ is the Lamb of God, the resting place of the Holy Dove, the ladder which unites heaven with earth; He is the true temple of God, the serpent of Moses, the fountain of Jacob, the manna in the wilderness and the true pillar of fire; He walks upon the sea, turns water into wine, satisfies the poor with bread, opens the eyes of the blind and raises one who has been four days dead. Every item of the Messianic programme, as foretold by the Hebrew prophets, was fulfilled both in the life of Jesus of Nazareth and in the Anointed Christ.

3. *The Son of God.* A third diadem must rest upon His brow; undeniably, He was Jesus 'whose father and mother we know'; indisputably, He was the Messiah foretold by Moses and the prophets; finally, John takes pains to prove that these twain are identical with the Son of God. This is categorically affirmed by Nathanael, Martha, and the author himself (John 1:49; 11:27; 20:31).

The references to Christ as the Son of God are found in about thirty passages and are distributed as follows:

(a) The full phrase 'the Son of God' occurs ten times, usually in a formal confession of the Saviour; in addition to the three cases quoted above we have the Baptist (1:34) and the man born blind, who said 'Lord I believe' and worshipped (9:35-38).¹

(b) The shorter title, 'The Son,' is found seventeen times and suggests the intimate deep-seated love which binds the Persons of the Godhead; for instance, in 3:35 we read, 'the Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand'; and again in v. 20, 'The Father loveth the Son and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth'. In the former case, the word translated 'love' is ἀγαπάω, the high illuminated love of unity of thought; in the latter, it is φιλέω, the love of warm attachment (this assumes that John wished to distinguish between the two words, as it seems that he does in 21: 15-17).

The careful reader will be rewarded in pondering the sevenfold occurrence of 'the Son' in v. 19-27.

(c) The phrase 'only-begotten Son' occurs four times in this Gospel, and once again in 1 John 4:9; the title describes a relation from which all others are excluded and stands in contrast to 'the first-begotten Son', which also occurs five times and views the Saviour as the first of a class of 'fellows' or brethren (Heb. 1: 9; 2:11).

Thus John presents his case in defence of our Lord's Person; He who was called Jesus is also the Messiah and as certainly He is the Son of God.

Finally, we are shown the practical *profit* of this doctrine; those who believe shall have life in His Name, a fixed, unforfeitable relationship with God.

The writer is careful to explain the origin and nature of this new life in Christ; it involves a threefold transfer from that which

¹ In John 9: 35 the margin gives 'the Son of Man', and textual authorities are evenly divided; we may be glad that we believe in both; no one has any right to decide for one reading as against the other, until he has carefully weighed John's use of both titles and has satisfied himself which of the two shines with the brighter lustre.

is flesh to that which is spirit, from what is local to that which is universal, and from the remote future to the immediate present.

First, the eternal life begins in us by a miraculous second birth. In his golden preface he discards the ordinary avenues of natural birth; this birth is 'not of bloods' (natural descent), 'nor of the will of the flesh' (that is, by man's own choice) nor is it 'of the will of a male'; it is a spiritual birth which lies wholly within the originating will of God (John 1:13). The same point is amplified in the Nicodemus story; that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The teacher in Israel had asked whether a man could enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born. He knew that that was impossible and if so, how much more so would be that greater miracle of remaking body and soul, mind and spirit!

In His reply the Lord reminds him of what was then going on in Jordan only eighteen miles away: John was preaching repentance through a baptism of water, he was promising regeneration by the Holy Ghost; there can be no life Godward without a new life which is independent of our ancestors, our choice, our wills and which is eternal, defying death itself (John 1:13).

Hence it is easy to see why John omits the stories of the star and the manger, the song of the angels and the visit of the shepherds; he has no birth narratives but on the last page of his Revelation we get an echo of these things. The shepherds were sent to the inn of the city of David to find a Saviour, the magi to the house to worship the Son of David, and so the message reads: 'I Jesus have sent mine angel . . . I am the Root and offspring of David, the bright and Morning Star' (Rev. 22:16). The evangelists Matthew and Luke devote five chapters to the earthly framework of the coming of the King, His human pedigree, His parentage and the signs attendant on His advent; for John, four words suffice: 'The Word became flesh.'

Secondly, the author would lead us out from the limits of a fixed locality into a region of boundless space; in Jerusalem He rejects the house of merchandise and the robbers' cave; in Samaria he ignores the empty site of a vanished temple and instead assures a thirsty outcast: 'Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when

neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father'—such molehills as these are too low and cramped. The doctrine, according to John, embraces a world which God loved and offers an uplifted Son of Man, who will draw, not Israel only, but all men to His feet (3:16; 4:42; 12:32). It is easy, therefore, to see why John omits the institution of the Lord's supper; elsewhere in the New Testament the breaking of bread is an act to be carried out at a stated time and place; John's message is, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you': for him the communion is a timeless experience, a perpetual banquet of the soul, as natural and as necessary as breathing (see chapter 6).

Thirdly, the last transition which John would effect is to recall our hearts from the distant future to the living and immediate present. The earlier evangelists have preserved many solemn warnings from our Lord's lips as to the hour of His return and the coming of His kingdom; much detail is given as to falling stars, earthquakes and portents in the sky, all of it drawn from the language of ancient prophecies. John mentions none of these. He himself had sat on the slopes of the Mount of Corruption (2 Kings 23:13) and heard the Olivet prophecy, but not one line of this has been preserved for us by him. For his brethren, equally inspired with himself, the hour of resurrection and the day of judgement lay centuries ahead. In the mind of the Beloved Disciple the coming of the Lord was a daily, hourly experience for the lovers of Jesus (14:18 and 23): the day of the judgement of the world took place in Jerusalem in the hour of His death (14:31). The hour of resurrection was actually taking place as He spoke beside the pool of Bethesda and in the temple: 'the hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God' (John 5. 25). The splitting of rocks, the shaking of sepulchres, and the rending of a woven veil can never be so impressive as the passage of a believing soul through the gateway of new birth; no angel seated on a stone beside an empty tomb can equal the glory of a risen life with Christ.

John will not wait until a great white throne is set; from his standpoint, the exposure of sin, the harvesting of its bitter fruits

and our union with our ascended Lord lie behind us, not before! And that his readers may know the truth of this in their own experience he has selected those memories which he records in his Gospel: 'These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name'.

—*The Evangelical Quarterly*

THE PAIRED WORDS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

HAROLD P. BARKER

I hope that your Greek Testament is more to you than a mere classic, that you read it *devotionally*, and make it the companion of your seasons of private communion with God.

No very profound knowledge of it, however, is needed for us to appreciate the wonderful significance of its numerous *paired words*. Let me explain what I mean. I use the phrase in a strictly limited sense. I do not include words that are used only twice by the same writer, as by Paul, for instance, in two of his epistles. Such words, though excluded from our present study, are worthy of our close attention. What light is thrown on Eph. 1:10, for example, by noticing that ἀνακεφαλαιόομαι, (*anakephalaioomai*) rendered 'gather together in one', is the word used also in Romans 13:9 (its only other occurrence) and there translated 'briefly comprehended' in A.V., and 'summed up' in R.V.

For my present purpose I use the expression 'paired words' with reference only to words that occur but *twice*, and used *by different writers*. We must confine ourselves to a very few instances, but they shall be instances that are deeply instructive, as well as interesting.

1. χαλεπός (*chalepos*), used by Paul and Matthew. In 2 Tim. 3:1 this word is used to describe the character of the times to be expected in the last days. They would be *perilous* times. R.V. gives 'grievous'. Men would be lovers of their own selves, of money, and of pleasures, rather than of God, and persecution